

week, we resolve to stay true to the American spirit and live according to our highest ideals.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 16 through October 22, 2011, as National Character Counts Week. I call upon public officials, educators, parents, students, and all Americans to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8738 of October 14, 2011**National Forest Products Week, 2011**

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

America's forests have long played an integral role in shaping and developing our Nation. They help us access clean water and air, drive discovery as natural laboratories, and make our communities more beautiful and vibrant places to live. From renewable energy and biofuels to green building materials, forests also provide a wide variety of products that make up an important part of our economy. During National Forest Products Week, we celebrate the value of our woodlands and recommit to careful stewardship and preservation of these national treasures.

Through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, my Administration continues to advance a 21st century conservation agenda and ensure we use our precious natural resources sustainably. Meeting the test of environmental stewardship often means finding the best ideas at the grassroots level, and this initiative is guided by the insights of Americans from across our country. From hunters and fishers to tribal leaders and young people, we all have a stake in safeguarding the woodlands we cherish. As we build the foundation for a smarter, more community-driven environmental strategy, we embrace the uniquely American idea that each of us has an equal share in the land around us and an equal responsibility to protect it.

This year, we also join the global community in commemorating the International Year of Forests. By bolstering our commitment to the responsible management and conservation of forests around the world, we sow the seeds of a greener future for our children and grandchildren.

To recognize the importance of products from our forests, the Congress, by Public Law 86–753 (36 U.S.C. 123), as amended, has designated the week beginning on the third Sunday in October of each year as “National Forest Products Week” and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 16 through October 22, 2011, as National Forest Products Week. I call on the people of the United States to join me in recognizing the dedicated individuals who are responsible for the stewardship of our forests and for the preservation, management, and use of these precious natural resources for the benefit of the American people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8739 of October 14, 2011

Blind Americans Equality Day, 2011

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Generations of blind and visually impaired Americans have dedicated their passion and skills to enhancing our national life—leading as public servants, penning works of literature, lending their voice to music, and inspiring as champions of sport. On Blind Americans Equality Day, we celebrate the achievements of blind and visually impaired Americans and reaffirm our commitment to advancing their complete social and economic integration.

My Administration is dedicated to ensuring Americans with disabilities have every opportunity to reach their full potential. Last year, I signed the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act to set new standards that enable people living with disabilities to access broadband, digital, and mobile innovations. To help level the playing field for employment, we are working to improve the Federal Government's compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Making electronic and information technology 508 compliant will give applicants with disabilities a fair chance and allow employees with disabilities to use necessary tools while on the job. By taking these steps, my Administration reaffirms its pledge to openness by making sure that people with disabilities can better access all the information the Federal Government has placed online.

This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the passage of the Randolph-Sheppard Act. For decades, the legislation has provided openings for blind Americans to work as vendors on Federal property, creating meaningful entrepreneurial opportunities and enabling them to contribute to our economy. These jobs have enriched the lives of those participating in the Randolph-Sheppard program and enhanced public understanding of blindness for those who have interacted with the program's vendors.

Though we have made progress in the march to equality for the blind and those with low vision, there is still more work to be done. In addition to